

of the Talmud.¹⁰¹ The article's pronouncements were given greater weight by the author's emphatic reference to the "highest teaching authority of the church" and his insistence that the growing ranks of the anti-Semitic movement included not only "many pious Catholics" but also "a great number of bishops and popes" from the past and present of the church. Dietrich Eckart, who already had important connections to the DAP but had not yet broken permanently with BVP circles, was quick to realize the significance of the article, rapidly reprinting it in its entirety in *Auf gut deutsch* with an editorial preface praising the "manly" courage of the *Beobachter* for publishing the much-needed article in the first place.¹⁰² Momentum began to build quickly behind the Catholic-inflected anti-Semitic campaign. The next issue of the *Beobachter* contained another lengthy discourse from a different Catholic priest, also anonymous, who praised the previous article in the strongest terms and reiterated its emphasis on the anti-Semitism of the popes and the need for a distinctly Catholic-oriented crusade to counter the "abominable offensive, the artillery barrage against Christian ideals" being launched by the Jews.¹⁰³ While the identity of the priest who authored the initial programmatic article remains uncertain, the author of the latter submission was the Catholic priest and journalist Bernhard Stempfle, who would become one of the most frequent contributors to the *Beobachter* in the ensuing months.¹⁰⁴

Stempfle had been born in 1882 in Munich and, after entering the priesthood in 1904, joined the Hieronymite (San Girolamo) order in Italy and immersed himself in journalistic activity initially in Rome, writing for the *Corriere della Sera* and a variety of German and Italian papers in the years leading up to the First World War. After the outbreak of war, he returned to Munich and engaged in pastoral work at the university, attempting to bridge divisions between Catholic university students and workers, while also cultivating close relationships with Reform Catholic elements in Munich, especially the nationalistic *Hofklerus* at St. Kajetan.¹⁰⁵ In 1919, when he first began publishing in the *Beobachter*, Stempfle was listed among the official clergy of the archdiocese of Munich-Freising, although there is no surviving record of any official ecclesiastical transfer (*Inkardination*) into the archdiocese upon his return from Italy.¹⁰⁶ In his articles in the *Beobachter* Stempfle returned consistently to the same common themes: the destructive influence of Jewish atheism, particularly in the Jewish press; the moral acceptability and necessity of ruthless persecutions of the Jews—even, potentially, pogroms—waged in defense of the faith and institutions of the Catholic Church; and the noble example set throughout the years by "courageous"

anti-Semitic leaders within the Catholic Church's hierarchy.¹⁰⁷ In early 1920, Stempfle became increasingly involved in radical right-wing paramilitary activities throughout the upper Bavarian hinterland, particularly as a central leader of the secretive anti-republican Organisation Kanzler (Orka), and for this reason his official involvement with the Nazi movement after its purchase of the *Beobachter* remained rather sporadic.¹⁰⁸ By early 1923, when he was chief editor of the anti-Semitic daily *Miesbacher Anzeiger*, headquartered some thirty-five miles southeast of Munich, Stempfle would reemerge not only as a leading journalistic figure within the broader *völkisch*-anti-Semitic movement in Bavaria but also as a regular confidant of Hitler.¹⁰⁹

In virtual simultaneity with Stempfle's activism and in the midst of the broader Catholic-oriented anti-Semitic campaign in the summer of 1919, Josef Roth, a young Catholic theology student (and future priest) with connections to the prewar Reform Catholic movement, emerged prominently in the pages of the *Beobachter* for the first time. Roth was born in 1897 in Ottobeuren and raised in Munich. His deeply religious parents, three of whose sons entered the Catholic priesthood, were extremely close to Archbishop Faulhaber.¹¹⁰ A decorated war veteran, Roth enrolled as a philosophy student at the University of Munich in February 1919; later that year, after fighting with the Freikorps Oberland during the brutal liberation of Munich from the *Räterepublik*, Roth switched officially to the study of theology to begin preparation for the Catholic priesthood.¹¹¹ Roth quickly emerged as one of the central student leaders of the Munich branch of the racist Deutsch-völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund (DVST), which would funnel countless members into the young Nazi movement. The DVST had been founded in northern Germany several months earlier as perhaps the most aggressive of all of the initial anti-Semitic groups established after the First World War and spread throughout virtually all major cities in Germany, particularly those with large university student populations.¹¹² While the DVST tended toward a nondogmatic and generally Protestant-oriented form of racist Christianity elsewhere, the Munich branch had much more of a Catholic inflection at its inception, with Dietrich Eckart serving as the featured speaker at the inaugural DVST gathering in Munich in May 1919.¹¹³ While Eckart was busy forging ties between the new DVST group and a variety of smaller right-wing organizations in Munich, such as the Deutsche Bürgervereinigung he had founded weeks earlier, plans were set in motion to establish an official DVST student section at the University of Munich that summer.¹¹⁴